

# West Virginia Department of Agriculture

Walt Helmick, Commissioner



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## **WVDA MICROBIOLOGY LAB RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS ACCREDITATION**

**Charleston, W.Va.** – The West Virginia Department of Agriculture’s (WVDA) Regulatory and Environmental Affairs Division (READ) microbiology laboratory has been accredited by the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA) for 15 methods it uses to test food.

“I am very proud of our laboratory staff, who continue to demonstrate their high level of competence,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Walt Helmick. “Whether it’s the microbiology lab or any of the other laboratories within the Department, West Virginia’s citizens can rest assured that there is a dedicated group of professionals working behind the scenes every day to protect the food supply, support animal health, and to guarantee labeling accuracy on numerous products.”

The federal Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) required that certain food testing be completed by ISO 17025 accredited laboratories. The READ microbiology lab now meets that requirement and results are now certified to be of the highest consistency and reliability.

“This is the gold standard for this lab,” said WVDA Laboratory Assistant Director Brenda Keavey. “We’ll be able to test more foods, and continue to protect the public from food-borne illnesses. Our management and technical standards will be accepted by anybody worldwide.” She noted that the animal feed laboratory is currently seeking a similar accreditation.

A2LA is the largest U.S.-based, multi-discipline accreditation body with over 35 years of experience providing internationally recognized accreditation services and quality training. Organizations are accredited to international standards and field-specific requirements developed with government and industry collaboration.

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